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Disability Issues Committee ♦ April 24, 2014
MCTS (Sypek Center) - 1:00 p.m.

Present: Bob Crawford (Talent Network Coordinator Financial Sector), Dr. Kimberly Schneider (MCTS), Dr. Denalerie Johnson-Faniel (Consultant), Steve Cook (ARC), Tom Shaw-Gardner (MC Office of the Disabled), Mary Ann Muller (MCSSS)

Staff: Beverly Mills, Maribel Duarte

Opening:

The meeting was opened by Disabilities Issues Chair, Dr. Kim Schneider with a special welcome to Bob Crawford who attended that first Strategic Planning meeting.

Kim updated briefly reviewed the development of the Strategic Planning and how the committee identified and ranked five critical issue areas i.e., Marketing, Transitions, Employability/Life Skills, Transportation & Social Services. She further suggested we take another look at these areas since many were ranked to be addressed in the first year. Adjustments were made to several goals (see updated document attached).

Marketing

Research and define population to be served and research and define stakeholder groups (employers, parents & educators): Year 3.

Bob Crawford mentioned there have been changes to Regulation 503 which has garnered curiosity with employers since it concerns a 7% set-aside for the disabled population. DVR is one resource for a list of employers however the population to be served should also identified so we have a clearer baseline, i.e., physical or mental disabilities. *The American Community Survey* was suggested as a good starting point; Tom volunteered to bring it to the next meeting. Committee agreed the legislation should be closely followed.

Additional goals under marketing include: Engage stakeholders and develop advisory group and define key message for each stakeholder group: Year 4 and Execute the messages; have employers share hiring success stories: Years 3, 4 & 5

Denalerie further suggested inviting speakers to present for the first 20 minutes at subsequent Disabilities Issues Committee meetings. Tom suggested highlighting people/organizations that received awards from the WIB and promote in newsletters and local press. Kim Schneider volunteered to create a press release.

Transitions

Update County book for CST/Counselor for model transition plan is **completed**. All transition resources now link to the website of the appropriate agency however a person would not necessarily know where to look. Tom suggested linking with the county webpage and Denalerie further suggested also linking to DVR agencies. MCTS will speak with their IT staff to begin “unburying” the links.

Develop a guide of entry level career paths: **Currently underway** -- Bob Crawford mentioned Bob Grimmie (DOLWD) is developing a career paths link which should be done in a couple months. Bev volunteered to contact LWD about this link and others containing Labor Market information such as Jobs4Jersey. Tom will share monthly job opportunity sheets and pass along to Beverly to disseminate accordingly. The goal will be to have a central clearinghouse to market to DVR-type entities as well as to contractors to fill 7% job quota. It was further suggested asking MidJersey and Princeton Chambers of Commerce to post entry level positions that would be suited for the disabled. Tom suggested Scott Elliott may be the right person to facilitate that conversation with Liz Tindall to ask for specific companies to identify these jobs. The DVR list should go out to more people; Denalerie mentioned there is a paid staff person from DVR that does this. Kim suggested Scott contact this person and together present at a Chamber meeting. Committee further agreed a person from DVR should be attending Disabilities Issues meetings.

Highlight success stories countywide Years 3, 4 & 5 and interactive curriculum that highlights real world scenarios: **Currently underway through CTE**

Employability/Life Skills

Career-Self Reflection Survey: **Year 3** -- link with Labor and Workforce Development website

Career/College Training: Already available

Skills portfolio: **Available on-line**. DVR currently has an assessment process; also possibly through a Talent Network Career Guide that will be available soon.

Resume Writing; Letters of Recommendation & Dress for Success: **All self-service**. Denalerie volunteered to share Dress for Success information with Tom and Steve.

Job Search: Form message boards to post openings

Support for Behavior Issues: Steve requested the addition of this category explaining this is an infrequent but essential support; especially for dually diagnosed people. Committee agreed; Tom also suggested speaking with Michelle Madiou, Mental Health Administrator for Mercer County.

Transportation

All four issues under this category are currently in the pipeline being addressed through the Mercer County Transportation Coalition.

Social Services

Collect & organize resource agencies, service providers and contact information; implement updates also prepare user friendly resource guide: **Year 3**

Clarify systematic referral procedure: **Years 3 & 4** -- overall goal is for all relevant agencies to use the same software package.

Connect & Streamline Assessment Procedures: **Years 3 & 4**

Advertise the Annual Expo; Connect to Resource Events: **Years 3, 4 & 5**--Tom mentioned the “Abilities Expo” at the Raritan Center on May 2, 3 & 4; also present to parents of new students at the County Store. Bev and/or Tom will speak to Marci about getting on the schedule.

Next Disabilities Issues Meeting scheduled for **June 18th @ 2:00** PM Mercer County Technical School (Sypek Campus)